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March 24, 2010

Letter sent by facsimile

Mr. Timothy A. Frazier
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Re: Comments Submitted to the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future.

Dear Mr. Frazier:

The Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition (NWSC) is a diverse and an ad hoc group of state utility regulators, state attorneys general, electric utilities and associate members representing 47 member organizations in 30 states. The NWSC was formed in 1993 out of frustration at the lack of progress the Department of Energy (DOE) had made in developing a permanent repository for spent nuclear fuel (SNF) and high-level radioactive waste (HLRW), as well as Congress's failure to sufficiently fund the nuclear waste disposal program (Program).

The primary focus by the NWSC has been to ensure that DOE and Congress carry out the principles outlined in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, as amended (NWPA) – protect ratepayer payments made into the Nuclear Waste Fund; ensure that the Program was appropriately funded on an annual basis; and the removal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste currently stranded at commercial and decommissioned plant sites.

We were surprised to learn recently that DOE's focus of the Program has now been transferred to research and development – looking for long-time horizon of 2050 - rather than continuing to focus on the NWPA. The clear intent of the NWPA was to remove SNF and HLRW during this generation, not to pass the problem on to future generations.

Since the Secretary of Energy tasked the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) to consider all alternatives for the storage, processing, and disposal of civilian and defense SNF and HLRW, we trust that the BRC takes into consideration the geologic repository at Yucca Mountain, NV. More than \$10B of ratepayer and taxpayer investment has been spent toward the viability of scientific and technical work carried out at the Yucca Mountain permanent repository – a site that has been studied extensively for more than 20 years by DOE's national laboratories, internationally renowned scientists, engineering firms, top universities throughout this country, and other government agencies.

The NWSC encourages the BRC to recommend that DOE continues with the review of the license application by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Abandoning the license application with prejudice will jeopardize the integrity of the extensive work, studies and records carried out at the Yucca Mountain site, which may destroy rather than preserving a road map for determining the viability of other future storage and disposal facilities.

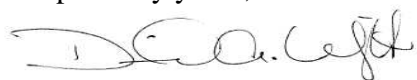
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The NWSC has already had direct involvement in preparing a report how to reform the Program as a quasi-government corporation to insulate it from future politics. We ask the BRC take into consideration the diverse and disparate membership of the NWSC, who would be ideal candidates to sit on a subcommittee to consider whether an independent entity should be established to manage the nation's civilian and defense waste in the future.

The members of the NWSC thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments. We look forward to the opportunity to working closely with the Blue Ribbon Commission and a timely resolution for the removal of SNF and HLRW from nuclear plant sites.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Wright", with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Wright
Commissioner, South Carolina Public Service Commission, and
Chairman, Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition

C: NWSC Member Roster